Jefferson College. Canonsburg. June 4 36

To the Society of Inquiry. Nassau Hall. Princeton

Dear, Brethren

In times of general darkness and declension. those who in any sense are placed as "Watchmen upon the walls of Zion" — should frequently hail each other and enquire, concerning the prosperity of the city of our God. That Societies of Inquiry are in a very important sense, "Watchmen" there can be no doubt. Their members are generally those, who look forward to the ministry of reconciliation, as their future vocation — They must, therefore feel a deep interest in whatever concerns. this high. and holy calling. — and whatever tends to increase this interest and make us more fit, for the arduous duties before us. should be eagerly sought after, and carefully secured. — In our experience, we have found few things, have more increased our interest in the Soc. of Inq. — than the receipt of communications from similar Societies, It is natural that intercourse between those, who are engaged in prosecution of the same objects, should ~~tept~~ create an intercommunity of feeling, and an interest in each others welfare, besides causing us to take a deeper interest in those objects themselves. We would therefore propose — that the correspondence formerly existing between your Society and ours be resumed, and continued at least semi-annu nually.—

We cannot want subjects on or about which, to correspond for the realities of religion are about us. and we profess to be deeply and personally interested in them.— But when we turn our eyes around and within us. we see but too many proofs — of what has so often been the subject of complaint.— that notwithstanding the numbers of professors of religion, still vital piety generally languishes in Colleges.— But instead of idly complaining of the prevalence of this great evil, it should be our purpose and endeavor to remedy it.— There are it is true many things to draw off our minds and affections from things divine and fix them on earth. while pursuing our preparatory course of study The rivalry and ambition — perhaps unavoidably incident to a college life — the various temptations to which the young are exposed — when surrounded by gay companions and far removed from the influence and restraints of parental authority, and very many other things — lead us away from the path of duty. and Oh! how hard it is to return. We have repeatedly been forced to ask ourselves with bitter remorse, "What do ye here," servants of the Lord? But is it necessary that we always live thus? Brethren we look to you for an answer.— Your institution has already educated one, now, as we trust in heaven, whose ~~course~~ life proved, that even in the walls of a college, and the withering atmosphere of study, communion with God may be enjoyed and the heart beat. nothing but piety. — We allude to James B. Taylor. — Does his spirit still linger among you — that spirit that induced him in one short week to converse practically, seriously and affectionately with 20 non professors of religion? We hope that such is, with you, the case. — In our midst, there have been those, whose holy conduct, has drawn, from the lips, of the most abandoned. — the unasked confession "If there is a Christian about" college, he is one" — and we hope there are yet some of the same spirit among us. but alas! how few.

In regard to the spirit of missions, which is, or should be one primary cause of the formation of Societies of Inquiry we cannot now say much. It is truly the spirit of Christ and if we have it not, we have no evidence that we are his. How flourishes this spirit with you Brethren? Is it active and glowing in your hearts? Do your members come to your meetings eagerly, and go away from them reluctantly? — Is it pleasant to you to meet together, and talk about the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom?

Would that we could answer these questions in the affirmative in regard to ourselves! But we cannot. — The missionary spirit is not we hope quite extinct here, — and we rejoice in being able to say there are some, here, who contemplate that they shall spend their lives, in a foreign, heathen land. Oh that their number were tenfold greater! — for until we, the young men in colleges, rise up in the strength of Almighty God, — and go forth, in numbers, bearing precious seed, — what progress can the kingdom of light make, in the thick darkness of nature!?

We remain Brethren, yours in the Lord.

— On behalf of the Soc. of Inquiry W. M. Lowrie, Cor. Sec.

Rec'd before 1st July. 1836 — G. M. Elder
Cor. Comt

18 3/4

Society of Inquiry
Nassau Hall
Princeton
N.J.

June
7

P.S. There are here this summer, about 110, or 120 professors of religion, including members, of the Seceder, and Union denominations, — and — about 120 non professors. — Most of these are amiable, and extremely moral, — the children of piety and prayer but in regard to all of them, we must say: "Can these dry bones ever "live?" — Fellow Christians, pray for us.